

Quality assurance is a planned and systematic pattern of all actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that adequate technical requirements are established; products and services conform to established technical requirements; and satisfactory performance is achieved.

Quality audit is a systematic examination of the acts and decisions with respect to quality in order to independently verify or evaluate the operational requirements of the quality program or the specification or contract requirements of the product or service.

Quality program is a program which is developed, planned, and managed to carry out cost-effectively all efforts to effect the quality of materials and services from concept exploration and definition through demonstration and validation, engineering and manufacturing development, production and deployment, and operations and support.

[56 FR 36460, July 31, 1991, as amended at 60 FR 33145, June 27, 1995]

246.102 Policy.

Departments and agencies shall also—

(1) Develop and manage a cost effective quality program to ensure that contract performance conforms to specified requirements. Apply the quality program to all contracts for services and products designed, developed, purchased, produced, stored, distributed, operated, maintained, or disposed of by contractors.

(2) Conduct quality audits to ensure the quality of products and services meet contractual requirements.

(3) Base the type and extent of Government contract quality assurance actions on the particular acquisition.

(4) Provide contractors the maximum flexibility in establishing efficient and effective quality programs to meet contractual requirements. Contractor quality programs may be modeled on military, commercial, national, or international quality standards.

[56 FR 36460, July 31, 1991, as amended at 60 FR 33145, June 27, 1995]

246.103 Contracting office responsibilities.

The contracting office may conduct product-oriented surveys and evaluations to determine—

(1) The adequacy of the technical requirements relating to quality; and

(2) Product conformance to design intent. Consider conducting the surveys and evaluations in conjunction with the activity responsible for technical requirements.

(a) Contracting offices are also responsible for—

(i) Assisting the technical activity in improving the quality requirements for contracts when first identified for competitive acquisition; and

(ii) Assisting in determining the cause of problems noted in user experience reports.

(b) The contracting office must coordinate with the quality assurance activity before changing any quality requirement.

(c) The activity responsible for technical requirements may prepare instructions covering the type and extent of Government inspections for acquisitions that are complex, have critical applications, or have unusual requirements.

(i) In preparing the instructions, the technical activity shall consider, as applicable—

(A) The past quality history of the contractor;

(B) The criticality of the material procured in relation to its intended use, considering such factors as—

(1) Reliability;

(2) Safety;

(3) Interchangeability; and

(4) Maintainability;

(C) Problems encountered in the development of the material;

(D) Problems encountered in other procurements of the same or similar material;

(E) Available feed-back data from contract administration, receiving, testing, or using activities; and

(F) The experience of other contractors in overcoming manufacturing problems.

(ii) The instructions shall—

(A) Be kept to a minimum;

(B) Comply with 246.470-2; and